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ABSTRACT

This publication presents information about the technical characteristics of the 1997 Florida Writing Assessment Program, Grades 4, 8, and 10. Descriptive and statistical information is provided for the census assessment, and the procedures used in prompt development, pilot testing, field testing, scoring, and item banking are reviewed. The psychometric properties of the 1998 census assessment are also examined. The Florida Writing Assessment Program evaluates the proficiency of students in generating a written response to an assigned topic (prompt) within a 45-minute period. In each grade, students are asked to respond to one of two prompts. The census assessment of Florida's students began in 1992 at grade 4. In January 1998, the census assessment involved 150,600 fourth graders in 1,548 schools. In February, a census assessment was conducted of 139,810 8th graders in 653 schools and 117,634 10th graders in 526 schools. New prompts were field tested in all three grades in February. Information is provided about the distribution of holistic score points by racial and ethnic group. Appendixes contain a list of writing assessment advisory committee members and a sample prompt evaluation form. (Contains 15 tables, 4 figures, and 10 references.) (SLD)

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Florida Writes! 1998 Technical Report

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Development of the Florida Writing Assessment Program

Introduction

This publication presents information about the technical characteristics of the 1997 Florida Writing Assessment Program, Grades 4, 8, and 10. Descriptive and statistical information of the census assessment are provided. Descriptions of the procedures utilized in prompt development, pilot testing, field testing, scoring, and item banking are reviewed. The psychometric properties of the 1998 census assessment are examined.

The Florida Writing Assessment Program evaluates the proficiency of students in generating a written response to an assigned prompt (writing topic) within a 45-minute period. In each grade, students are asked to respond to one of two spiraled prompts. The census assessment of Florida's students began in 1992 at grade 4, in 1993 at grade 8, and in 1994 at grade 10. In late January 1998, a census assessment was conducted of 150,600 fourth grade students in 1,548 schools. In early February 1998, a census assessment was conducted of 139,810 eighth grade students in 653 schools, and 117,364 tenth grade students in 526 schools. In February, new prompts were field-tested in grades 4, 8, and 10.

Authorization for the Florida Writing Assessment Program

Authorization of the Florida Writing Assessment Program occurred in 1990 when the Florida Legislature revised Section 229.57 of the Florida Statutes. At this time, the requirement for the assessment of students' writing proficiency by the Statewide Assessment Program was established. Educators, administrators, and citizens throughout Florida participated in the planning and development of the Florida Writing Assessment Program.

The writing assessment program is based upon current teaching theory and practices and the state-adopted Standards of Excellence in Writing, the Uniform Student Performance Standards in grades 6-12, and the Minimum Student Performance Standards (MSPS). These standards were developed by the Department of Education (DOE) in conjunction with school and district educators across the state of Florida. A complete listing of the Standards of Excellence in Writing, Uniform Student Performance Standards, and MSPS can be found in Student Performance Standards of Excellence for Florida Schools in Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Writing (Department of Education, 1984); Uniform Student Performance Standards for Selected Courses, Grades 6-12 (Department of Education, 1989); and the Minimum Student Performance Standards for Florida Schools (Department of Education, 1990).

Writing assessment advisory committees assisted the DOE in the development of the assessment program. Committee members were appointed to serve because of their teaching or testing experience or their interest in Florida's public education. Teachers, curriculum supervisors, school administrators, district testing supervisors, and citizens representing different geographical areas, gender, racial, and ethnic groups composed the committees. Appendix 1 lists the members of the 1997-1998 writing assessment advisory committees for grades 4, 8, and 10.

Prompt Specifications and Prompt Development

Development of Prompt Specifications.

Prompt specifications were developed and approved by the advisory committees to ensure consistency in the prompt format for each succeeding year (see Figures 1, 2, and 3). Prompts at grade 4 direct students to tell a story (narrative prompt) or to explain (expository prompt). Prompts at grades 8 and 10 direct students to explain (expository prompt) or to persuade (persuasive prompt).

Each prompt format contains two sections. First, an opening statement is included that directs the student to the writing topic. Second, information is presented about the type of writing that the student should produce. Ideas or concepts are suggested that the student should contemplate before writing.

Development of Prompts.

Prompt development began in November 1990 for grade 4, in November 1991 for grade 8, and in the spring of 1992 for grade 10. The advisory committees discussed topics of interest to students and the kinds of topics that are appropriate for a statewide assessment program. The advisory committees evaluated prompts that were submitted by committee members and DOE staff, prompts used in other states' testing programs, and prompts purchased from a regional educational consortium. Appendix 2 presents the evaluation form employed during the screening process.

The advisory committees decided that individual students would read and interpret the prompts independently. Therefore, the committee members scrutinized word choice, syntax, concept familiarity, sentence complexity, and overall reading level of each prompt during the review process.

To prevent item (prompt) bias within the Florida Writing Assessment Program, the DOE examined prompts during prompt development and after pilot testing and field testing. A formal review of each prompt was conducted through prompt-review sessions by advisory committee members. The committee members examined each prompt to ensure that the prompt met specifications and that the prompt was not biased for or against any student because of gender, race, ethnicity, or geographical region. Prompts that might have been objectionable to any student or biased for or against any group of students were modified or discarded.

Figure 1. Specification for the Narrative Writing Prompts

Grade 4

Purpose of prompt specification: To ensure that all prompts tell the students the subject (topic) and purpose of writing.

Definition of narration: It is writing that recounts a personal or fictional experience or tells a story based on a real or imagined event. Narrative writing is characterized, as appropriate, by insight, creativity, drama, suspense, humor, or fantasy. The unmistakable purpose of this type of writing is to create a central theme or impression in the reader's mind.

Cue terms to use in narrative prompts are tell about, tell what happened, or write a story. Narrative prompts should avoid the term "why" because it tends to elicit pure expository writing.

Introduction

Prompts contain two types of statements: Writing Situation and Directions for Writing. The two elements of the prompt may be one or several sentences long.

Writing Situation

The writing situation statement directs the student to write on a specific topic described by a key word or phrase. This theme, established by either a key word or phrase, or the student's narrowing of it, serves as the central idea of the student's written response. The statement provides examples or definitions of the theme. The intent is to provide a common understanding of the meaning of the theme by expanding, restating, or clarifying the central idea for the student. The intent is not to preclude the student's narrowing or restating of the theme to suit his or her own plan. An example is

> Everyone has had an experience he or she will never forget.

Directions for Writing

The directions for writing actually include a strategy statement that is intended to suggest an approach for those students who might have some difficulty getting started. It provides the beginning of a possible plan for the writer's piece. The directions for writing should begin with a phrase such as "Before you begin writing, ..." An example is

> Before you begin writing, think about a special day.
>
> Now write a story about what happened on your special day.

Figure 2. Specification for the Expository Writing Prompts

Grades 4, 8, and 10

Purpose of prompt specification: To ensure that all prompts tell the students the subject (topic) and purpose of writing.

Definition of exposition: It is writing that gives information, explains how or why, clarifies a process, or defines a concept. Though objective and not dependent on emotion, expository writing may be lively, engaging, and reflective of the writer's underlying commitment to the topic. The unmistakable purpose of this type of writing is to inform, clarify, explain, define, or instruct.

Cue words that should be used in expository prompts are why, how, and what.

Introduction

Prompts contain two types of statements: Writing Situation and Directions for Writing. The two elements of the prompt may be one or several sentences long.

Writing Situation

The writing situation statement directs the student to write on a specific topic described by a key word or phrase. This theme, established by either a key word or phrase, or the student's narrowing of it, serves as the central idea of the student's written response. The statement provides examples or definitions of the theme. The intent is to provide a common understanding of the meaning of the theme by expanding, restating, or clarifying the central idea for the student. The intent is not to preclude the student's narrowing or restating of the theme to suit his or her own plan. An example is

> Everyone has jobs or chores.

Directions for Writing

The directions for writing actually include a strategy statement that is intended to suggest an approach for those students who might have some difficulty getting started. It provides the beginning of a possible plan for the writer's piece. The directions for writing should begin with a phrase such as "Before you begin writing, ..." An example is

> Think about one of your jobs or chores.
>
> Now explain why you do your job or chore.

Figure 3. Specification for the Persuasive Writing Prompts

Grades 8 and 10

Purpose of prompt specification: To ensure that all prompts tell the students the subject (topic), purpose of writing, and audience.

Definition of persuasion: It is writing that attempts to convince the reader that a point of view is valid or that the reader should take a specific action. If it is important to present other sides of an issue, the writer does so, but in a way that makes her or his position clear. The unmistakable purpose of this writing is to convince the reader of something.

Cue words that should be used in persuasive prompts are convince, persuade, or why.

Introduction

Prompts contain two types of statements: Writing Situation and Directions for Writing. The two elements of the prompt may be one or several sentences long.

Writing Situation

The writing situation statement directs the student to write on a specific topic described by a key word or phrase. This theme, established by either a key word or phrase, or the student's narrowing of it, serves as the central idea of the student's written response. The statement provides examples or definitions of the theme. The intent is to provide a common understanding of the meaning of the theme by expanding, restating, or clarifying the central idea for the student. The intent is not to preclude the student's narrowing or restating of the theme to suit his or her own plan. An example is

> The principal at your school has been asked to discuss with a parent group the effect of watching television on students' grades.

Directions for Writing

The directions for writing actually include a strategy statement that is intended to suggest an approach for those students who might have some difficulty getting started. It provides the beginning of a possible plan for the writer's piece. An example is

> Think about the effect watching television has on your grades and your friends' grades.
>
> Now write to convince your principal to accept your point of view on the effect watching television has on grades.

Prompt Pilot Test and Field Test

Pilot Test Administration.

The prompts for the spring 1998 census assessment were obtained after the pilot testing and field testing that occurred from 1990-1997. Beginning in November 1990 for grade 4, in November 1991 for grade 8, and November 1992 for grade 10, prompts representing various types of writing (i.e., to explain, to tell a story, and to convince) were pilot-tested on students throughout Florida.

In October 1997 pilot testing of newly developed prompts continued. Approximately 40 students responded to each newly developed prompt. After the pilot test, advisory committee members read and analyzed the student responses to determine which prompts to utilize in the field test. The advisory committees used student responses to evaluate prompts for clarity, relevance, appeal to the target audience, suitability for development of a response within 45 minutes, and for potential bias.

Field Test Administration.

In February 1998 prompts were spiraled and field-tested in grades 4, 8, and 10. At grade 4, 20,831 students responded to 1 of 14 spiraled prompts. At grade 8. 21,716 students responded to 1 of 14 prompts. At grade 10, 21,815 students responded to 1 of 15 spiraled prompts. The schools selected to participate in the field test represented, as closely as possible, the achievement levels of Florida's fourth grade, eighth grade, and tenth grade students.

The test materials for the field test were distributed to the districts along with manuals containing explicit administration instructions and scripts. The participating schools were allowed to select the actual date of testing within a one-week period. Students were given a planning sheet and writing folder and, as in the pilot test, 45 minutes to read, plan, and respond to the prompt.

Field Test Scoring.

After the field test administration, writing assessment advisory committee members and DOE staff read and scored student responses. Papers were scored employing the focused holistic rubric (see Figure 4) that the advisory committee had developed. The committees discussed student responses and compared the scores assigned to similar responses. Consensus was achieved when at least 85% of the committee members agreed on the score given to a response and DOE staff could support that score. These consensus papers, referred to as rangefinders, were used to train readers.

The scoring contractor handled the training of readers and the scoring of the remainder of the student responses. Readers were required to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree; each one had to produce a piece of writing that was evaluated by the scoring contractor's staff; and

each had to pass an interview process. All readers had to attend a training session that included identifying the criteria used to determine the focused holistic rubric, reviewing and discussing committee-scored responses, and scoring qualifying sets (prescored papers employed to determine reader's ability to apply the focused holistic rubric). Readers were trained on one prompt before they began training and scoring student responses on the next prompt. Training and reading of student responses continued until all the responses were scored. Scoring student responses took approximately four days per grade level.

Evaluation of the Field Test Results.

Descriptive statistics were obtained for each field-tested prompt. The percentages of exact agreement, contiguous agreement, resolution scores (noncontiguous scores that were refereed), and nonscorable responses were evaluated. For each prompt, the frequency and percentage distributions by gender, racial/ethnic group, and primary language were compared. Written reviews of the field test responses were provided by the contractor's staff and readers who scored the field test responses. Based upon the evaluations, statistics, and expert judgment about the content and quality of student responses, DOE staff determined which prompts would be included in the item (prompt) bank for the census assessment.

Figure 4. Focused Holistic Rubric: How Papers Are Scored

The students' responses are scored using the holistic method. In this method of scoring, trained readers evaluate a piece of writing for its overall quality. Holistic scoring requires readers to evaluate the work as a whole, while considering four elements: focus, organization, support, and conventions. In this type of scoring, readers are trained not to become overly concerned with any one aspect of writing but to look at the response as a whole.

Focus refers to how clearly the paper presents and maintains a clear main idea, theme, or unifying point. Papers representing the higher end of the point scale demonstrate a consistent awareness of the topic and do not contain extraneous information. Papers representing the middle and lower ends of the point scale contain either loosely related information or extraneous information.

Organization refers to the structure or plan of development (beginning, middle, and end) and whether the points logically relate to one another. Organization refers to the use of transitional devices (terms, phrases, and variation in sentence structure) to (1) signal the relationship of the supporting ideas to the main idea, theme, or unifying point and (2) the evidence of the connection and movement between sentences. Papers representing the higher end of the point scale use transitions to signal the plan or text structure and end with summary or concluding statements. Papers representing the middle and lower ends of the point scale may lack transitional devices or concluding statements.

Support refers to the quality of the details used to explain, clarify, or define. The quality of the support depends on word choice, specificity, depth, credibility, and thoroughness. Papers representing the higher end of the point scale provide fully developed elaborated examples and illustrations and the relationship between the supporting ideas and the topic is clear. Papers representing the middle and lower ends of the point scale may contain support that is a bare list of events or reasons or support extended by a detail.

Conventions refer to the mechanics of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and variation in sentence structures used in the paper. These conventions are basic writing skills included in Florida's Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks. Papers representing the higher end of the point scale follow, with few exceptions, the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling and use a variety of sentence structures to present ideas. Papers representing the middle and lower ends of the point scale may contain some or many errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and sentence structure and may have little variation in sentence structure.

Census Assessment Procedures

Administration Procedures

The DOE administered the Florida Writing Assessment Program with the cooperation of the district coordinator of assessment in each of the state's 67 school districts and four laboratory schools. District coordinators designated and trained school coordinators, maintained materials control, and packed and shipped test materials to the schools and contractor.

School coordinators controlled all assessment materials within their school, trained test administrators, and supervised test administration. In most instances, test administrators were either classroom teachers or guidance counselors.

The DOE provided instructional manuals for all personnel involved. District and school coordinators received a common manual; test administrators received a separate manual.

For the spring 1998 census assessment, districts were requested to test all students in grades 4, 8, and 10 except for students classified in certain categories. Students eligible for exemption from testing included the following: (a) students whose primary language is not English and who have been receiving services in an approved Limited English Proficiency (LEP) program for less than two years, (b) students who have a temporary physical disability or temporary emotional problem, or (c) full- or part-time exceptional education students with a current individual educational plan (IEP) who have been classified according to State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.331, FAC. Students classified as Educable Mentally Handicapped, Trainable Mentally Handicapped, Hearing Impaired, Specific Learning Disabled, Emotionally Handicapped, Profoundly Handicapped, or Physically Impaired (with impaired communication abilities) were permitted to be exempted from testing by the classroom teacher or school administrator. Exceptional educational students were permitted to participate in the writing test with or without modifications to the test administration conditions. Excluded from the statistics in this report are students classified as Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Specific Learning Disabled, Emotionally Handicapped, Physically Impaired, and Educable Mentally Handicapped. Specific guidelines for exemptions may be found in the spring 1998 Florida Writing Assessment Program Administration Manual (Department of Education, 1998a).

Students were given a piece of paper, lined on one side, on which to plan their response and a writing folder on which to write their response. Students were given 45 minutes to read, plan, and write a response to a prompt. Only the writing in the folder was scored.

Rangefinder Selection Procedures

Members of the grade 4, grade 8, and grade 10 advisory committees and the DOE staff met on separate weeks in late February to read, discuss, and assign scores to several hundred student responses. A member of the scoring contractor's staff observed the discussions.

Consensus was achieved when at least 85% of the committee members agreed on the score given to a student response and the DOE's writing assessment specialist could support that score.

After the advisory committees met, the scoring contractor's senior staff and the DOE's writing assessment specialist selected the student responses (i.e., the rangefinders) that were used to train readers. The scoring contractor, under the direction of the DOE writing assessment specialist, prepared annotations for the selected papers, revised the annotations as necessary, and placed the selected papers in scoring guides. The papers in the scoring guides were selected to show the readers the range of responses at each score point and the variety of response strategies.

Scoring Procedures

The Florida Writing Assessment Program uses a focused holistic method (see Figure 4) of scoring responses. Responses are scored holistically for overall impression on the reader. Holistic scoring assumes that the skills required for writing are closely interrelated and do not need to be separated from one another. A reader reads the writing sample once for overall impression and assigns the student response a numerical rating based upon her or his judgment of how well the student response meets the established criteria.

Fourth Grade Scoring Rubric.

Score of 1: The writing may only minimally address the topic because there is little, if any, development of supporting ideas, and unrelated information may be included. The writing that is relevant to the topic does not exhibit an organizational pattern; few, if any, transitional devices are used to signal movement in the text. Supporting ideas may be sparse, and they are usually provided through lists, clichés, and limited or immature word choice. Frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure may impede communication. The sentence structure may be limited to simple constructions.

Score of 2: The writing may be slightly related to the topic or may offer little relevant information and few supporting ideas or examples. The writing that is relevant to the topic exhibits little evidence of an organizational pattern or use of transitional devices. Development of supporting ideas may be inadequate or illogical. Word choice may be limited or immature. Frequent errors may occur in basic punctuation and capitalization, and commonly used words may be frequently misspelled. The sentence structure may be limited to simple constructions.

Score of 3: The writing is generally focused on the topic, although it may contain some extraneous or loosely related information. Although an organizational pattern has been attempted and some transitional devices have been used, lapses may occur. The paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Some supporting ideas or examples may not be developed. Word choice is adequate but limited, predictable, and occasionally vague. Knowledge of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization is demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly. There has been an attempt to use a variety of sentence structures, although most are simple constructions.

Score of 4: The writing is generally focused on the topic, although it may contain some extraneous or loosely related information. An organizational pattern is evident, although lapses may occur. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. In some areas of the response, the supporting ideas may contain specifics and details, while in other areas, the supporting ideas may not be developed. Word choice is generally adequate. Knowledge of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization is demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly. There has been an attempt to use a variety of sentence structures, although most are simple constructions.

Score of 5: The writing is focused on the topic with adequate supporting ideas or examples. There is an organizational pattern, although a few lapses may occur. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. Word choice is adequate but may lack precision. Most sentences are complete, although a few fragments may occur. There may be occasional errors in subject/verb agreement and in standard forms of verbs and nouns, but not enough to impede communication. The conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are generally followed. Various kinds of sentence structures are used.

Score of 6: The writing is focused, has a logical organizational pattern (including a beginning, middle, conclusion, and transitional devices), and has ample supporting ideas or examples. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. The writing demonstrates a mature command of the language, including precision in word choice. Subject/verb agreement and verb and noun forms are generally correct. With few exceptions, the sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. Various kinds of sentence structures are used.

Unscorable (0): The score of unscorable is given to three categories of responses. First, the student response is not related to what the prompt requested students to do. Second, the student refuses to respond or simply copies or paraphrases the prompt as a response. Finally, the writing folder is blank, the response is illegible or incomprehensible (words are arranged in such a way that no meaning is conveyed), the response is written in a foreign language, or the response contains an insufficient amount of writing to determine if the student was attempting to address the prompt.

Eighth Grade Scoring Rubric.

Score of 1: The writing may only minimally address the topic. The paper is a fragmentary or incoherent listing of related ideas or sentences or both. Little, if any, development of support or organizational pattern or both is apparent. Limited or inappropriate word choice frequently obscures meaning. Gross errors in sentence structure and usage may impede communication. Frequent and blatant errors may occur in the basic conventions of mechanics and usage, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

Score of 2: The writing is related to the topic but includes extraneous or loosely related material. Little evidence of an organizational pattern may be demonstrated, and the paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Development of support is inadequate or illogical. Word choice is limited, inappropriate, or vague. There is little, if any, variation in sentence structure, and gross errors in sentence structure may occur. Errors in basic conventions of mechanics and usage may occur, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

Score of 3: The writing is generally focused on the topic but may include extraneous or loosely related material. An organizational pattern has been attempted, but the paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Some support is included, but development is erratic. Word choice is adequate but may be limited, predictable, or occasionally vague. There is little, if any, variation in sentence structure. Knowledge of the conventions of mechanics and usage is usually demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly.

Score of 4: The writing is generally focused on the topic but may include extraneous or loosely related material. An organizational pattern is apparent, although lapses may occur. The paper exhibits some sense of completeness or wholeness. The support, including word choice, is adequate, although development may be uneven. There is little variation in sentence structure, and most sentences are complete. The paper generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling.

Score of 5: The writing focuses on the topic, and its organizational pattern provides for a progression of ideas, although some lapses may occur. The paper conveys a sense of completeness or wholeness. The support is ample. The writing demonstrates a mature command of the language, including precision in word choice. There is variation in sentence structure, and, with rare exceptions, sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. The paper generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling.

Score of 6: The writing is focused, purposeful, and reflects insight into the writing situation. The paper conveys a sense of completeness and wholeness with adherence to the main idea, and its organizational pattern provides for a logical progression of ideas. The support is substantial, specific, relevant, concrete, and/or illustrative. The paper demonstrates a commitment to and an involvement with the subject, clarity in presentation of ideas, and may use creative writing strategies appropriate to the purpose of the paper. The writing demonstrates a mature command of the language (word choice) with freshness of expression. Sentence structure is varied, and sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. Few, if any, convention errors occur in mechanics, usage, and punctuation.

Unscorable (0): The score of unscorable is given to three categories of responses. First, the student response is not related to what the prompt requested students to do. Second, the student refuses to respond or simply copies or paraphrases the prompt as a response. Finally, the writing folder is blank, the response is illegible or incomprehensible (words are arranged in such a way that no meaning is conveyed), the response is written in a foreign language, or the

response contains an insufficient amount of writing to determine if the student was attempting to address the prompt.

Tenth Grade Scoring Rubric.

Score of 1: The writing addresses the topic but may lose focus by including extraneous or loosely related ideas. The response may have an organizational pattern, but it may lack a sense of completeness or closure. There is little, if any, development of the support, and the support may consist of generalizations or fragmentary lists. Limited or inappropriate word choice may obscure meaning. Frequent and blatant errors may occur in the basic conventions of mechanics and usage, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

Score of 2: The writing addresses the topic but may lose focus by including extraneous or loosely related ideas. The organizational pattern usually includes a beginning, middle, and ending, but these elements may be brief. The development of support may be erratic and nonspecific, and ideas may be repeated. Word choice may be limited, predictable, or vague. Errors may occur in the basic conventions of sentence structure, mechanics, usage, and punctuation, but commonly used words are usually spelled correctly.

Score of 3: The writing is focused but may contain ideas loosely connected to the topic. An organizational pattern is demonstrated, but the response may lack a logical progression of ideas. Development of support may be uneven. Word choice is adequate, and some variation in sentence structure is demonstrated. The response generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, punctuation, and spelling.

Score of 4: The writing is focused on the topic and includes few, if any, loosely related ideas. An organizational pattern is apparent, and it is strengthened by the use of transitional devices. The support is consistently developed, but may lack specificity. Word choice is adequate, and variation in sentence structure is demonstrated. The response generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, punctuation, and spelling.

Score of 5: The writing is focused on the topic, and its organizational pattern provides for a logical progression of ideas. Effective use of transitional devices contributes to a sense of completeness. The support is consistently developed through ample use of specific details and examples. The writing demonstrates a mature command of the language, and there is variation in sentence structure. The response generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, punctuation, and spelling.

Score of 6: The writing is focused and purposeful, and it reflects insight into the writing situation. The organizational pattern provides for a logical progression of ideas. Effective use of transitional devices contributes to a sense of completeness. The development of the support is substantial, specific, relevant, concrete. The writer shows commitment to and an involvement with the subject and may use creative writing strategies. The writing demonstrates a mature

command of the language with freshness of expression. Sentence structure is varied, and few, if any, convention errors occur in mechanics, usage, punctuation, and spelling.

Unscorable (0): The score of unscorable is given to three categories of responses. First, the student response is not related to what the prompt requested students to do. Second, the student refuses to respond or simply copies or paraphrases the prompt as a response. Finally, the writing folder is blank, the response is illegible or incomprehensible (words are arranged in such a way that no meaning is conveyed), the response is written in a foreign language, or the response contains an insufficient amount of writing to determine if the student was attempting to address the prompt.

Contractor Training and Scoring Procedures.

Student responses were scored at two different sites due to the number of students involved in the Florida Writing Assessment program. Student responses at grades 4 and 8 were scored in Florida, and student responses for grade 10 were scored in Florida and in North Carolina.

The scoring contractor employed two scoring directors per grade level to lead the scoring process. The scoring directors trained the team leaders, who subsequently trained the readers. Committee-scored responses were utilized during the training and qualifying process to ensure that the scoring criteria were applied. Each reader had to score a minimum of 70% of the papers with exact agreement to qualify as a reader. Readers were required to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree; each one had to produce a piece of writing that was evaluated by the scoring contractor's staff; and each had to pass an interview process. The contractor employed 267 readers in Florida and 46 readers in North Carolina. Of the 313 readers employed to score student responses, 29 held doctoral degrees and 88 held master's degrees.

Readers were trained on and scored responses for only one prompt during each scoring session. During each day of the scoring process, readers scored validity packets (prescored responses) to ensure that the scoring criteria were being consistently and correctly applied. Readers' validity packet scores were examined, and retraining of the readers was performed as necessary. Furthermore, retrained readers were paired with readers who consistently and correctly applied the criteria for the subsequent rounds of reading.

Each student response was read by two readers who assigned the response a score of one to nine. Scores of 7, 8, and 9 are unscorable for the reasons described above, and were therefore assigned a final score of 0. If the scores were in perfect agreement or had contiguous agreement, then the average of those scores would be assigned. However, when readers assigned noncontiguous scores the response would be read by a referee (scoring director) who would assign a score. If the referee's score was in perfect agreement with a reader's score or an average of the readers' scores, then that score would be assigned. In a very few instances, another referee (site scoring director) would read the response and assign the score.

Psychometric Characteristics of the Census Assessment

Descriptive Statistics

One thousand five hundred forty-eight schools and 150,600 fourth grade students participated in the spring assessment. The average score across prompts for fourth grade students was 3.0. Six hundred fifty-three schools and 139,810 eighth grade students participated in the spring assessment. The average score across prompts for eighth grade students was 3.3. Five hundred twenty-six schools and 117,364 tenth grade students participated in the spring assessment. The average score across prompts for tenth grade students was 3.6. The measures of central tendency and descriptive statistics of prompts by grade are presented in Table 1. Means and standard deviations of prompts by racial/ethnic group, gender, and primary language spoken at home are presented in Table 2.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for the Florida Writing Assessment Program by Grade and Prompt

	Grade 4		Grade 8		Grade 10	
	Expository	Narrative	Expository	Persuasive	Expository	Persuasive
Number of Schools	1,548	1,548	653	653	526	526
Number of Students	75,393	75,207	69,916	69,894	58,666	58,698
Mean	3.0	3.1	3.4	3.2	3.6	3.5
Q1	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Median	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.5
Q3	3.5	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Mode	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0
Standard Deviation	0.83	0.86	0.85	0.84	0.91	0.91
Score Range	0-6	0-6	0-6	0-6	0-6	0-6

Note. These and subsequent analyses exclude exempted exceptional students.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Prompts by Racial/Ethnic Group, Gender and Primary Language

	Grade 4				Grade 8				Grade 10			
	Expository		Narrative		Expository		Persuasive		Expository		Persuasive	
	MN	SD	MN	SD	MN	SD	MN	SD	MN	SD	MN	SD
Racial/Ethnic Group												
White	3.12	0.80	3.19	0.82	3.50	0.81	3.38	0.80	3.77	0.87	3.67	0.86
Black	2.74	0.86	2.79	0.87	3.07	0.85	2.96	0.83	3.29	0.89	3.17	0.90
Hispanic	2.98	0.86	3.01	0.89	3.22	0.83	3.14	0.87	3.49	0.90	3.35	0.92
Asian/ Pacific Islander	3.25	0.79	3.33	0.83	3.62	0.87	3.50	0.86	3.98	0.91	3.75	0.93
Am. Indian/ Alaskan Native	3.04	0.78	3.04	0.88	3.36	0.83	3.26	0.74	3.67	0.98	3.54	0.87
Multiracial	3.12	0.77	3.19	0.88	3.37	0.89	3.34	0.83	3.77	0.96	3.52	0.91
Unknown	2.80	0.89	2.72	1.02	2.91	0.98	2.83	1.04	3.12	1.08	3.10	1.12
Gender												
Female	3.12	0.82	3.20	0.84	3.48	0.83	3.41	0.80	3.75	0.85	3.65	0.86
Male	2.89	0.84	2.91	0.86	3.22	0.85	3.07	0.85	3.48	0.95	3.36	0.94
Unknown	2.69	0.68	2.75	0.94	2.77	0.97	2.85	1.22	2.95	1.19	2.90	1.17
Primary Language												
English	3.05	0.83	3.10	0.85	3.39	0.84	3.28	0.83	3.65	0.90	3.55	0.89
Spanish	2.88	0.88	2.91	0.92	3.12	0.84	2.98	0.91	3.30	0.93	3.13	0.99
Other	2.83	0.82	2.94	0.88	3.21	0.86	3.07	0.87	3.47	1.01	3.27	1.04
Unknown	2.92	0.85	3.02	0.88	3.36	0.85	3.26	0.85	3.62	0.87	3.48	0.91

Note. MN=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation

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Validity

The American Psychological Association's (APA) Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1985) addressed the concept of validity in testing:

> Validity is the most important consideration in test evaluation. The concept refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores. Test validation is the process of accumulating evidence to support any particular inference. Validity, however, is a unitary concept. Although evidence may be accumulated in many ways, validity always refers to the degree to which that evidence supports the inferences that are made from the scores. The inferences regarding specific uses of a test are validated, not the test itself (p. 9).

Validation Process.

The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1985) describe three categories of validity: content validity, construct validity, and criterion-related validity (predictive and concurrent). The primary validity issue for the Florida Writing Assessment Program is content validity. Content validity is the type of validity of interest here because test scores are only interpreted in terms of what they indicate about student achievement of the designated performance criteria. Content validity of the test is established by following the plan and procedures for developing and selecting prompts and verifying that the scores are interpreted in the correct manner.

Ensuring content validity of *Florida Writes!* was a multifaceted process. First, a literature review of the writing process and best practices was conducted. A list of literature utilized in this phase of the process may be found in three publications: Florida Writes! Report on the 1998 Assessment, Grade 4 (Department of Education, 1998b); Florida Writes! Report on the 1998 Assessment, Grade 8 (Department of Education, 1998c); and Florida Writes! Report on the 1998 Assessment, Grade 10 (Department of Education, 1998d). Second, research about the issues in designing a direct writing assessment was examined. Wolcott and Legg (1990) compiled research on the issues related to the design of writing assessment programs, issues in test development, technical issues, scoring issues, and reporting issues. At the conclusion of these two phases of the process, a plan was formalized to ensure that appropriate practices and procedures were conducted. Validity was substantiated by verifying that prompt construction plans and procedures were followed. The general procedures used in prompt development were as follows:

1. The Standards of Excellence in Writing, Uniform Student Performance Standards in Grades 6-12, and the Minimum Student Performance Standards (MSPS) were utilized as the basis for developing prompt specifications.

2. Prompt specifications detailing the definition of the type of writing, cue words, writing situations with examples, and the directions for writing with examples were developed by the advisory committees (see Figures 1, 2, and 3).

3. Prompts were written according to the guidelines provided by the prompt specifications and then evaluated by the advisory committees (see Appendix 2).

4. Prompts were pilot-tested and student responses evaluated. Surveys of students and test administrators were conducted and evaluated.

5. Prompts were field-tested in Florida school districts that represented typical achievement levels of Florida's fourth grade, eighth grade, and tenth grade students.

6. Prompts were analyzed statistically and by expert judgment. Prompts were subjected to final editing, as necessary.

7. A prompt was entered into the item pool when the prompt met the criteria established by the advisory committees and the DOE staff.

Validity of Scores.

To provide feedback to the team leaders on the performance of readers in adhering to the criteria, validity packets were intermittently given to readers to score. Scores reported were the number of responses in agreement, the number of responses scored high, and the number of responses scored low. Readers who did not follow the criteria were retrained.

The Writing Advisory Committees and the DOE's writing assessment specialist read and scored the papers included in the validity packets. Responses in the validity packets had at least 85% of the committee members agreeing on the score given and the DOE's writing assessment specialist supporting that score. For each prompt at grades 4, 8, and 10, the committees generated 7 to 24 validity packets containing between 10 and 12 student responses.

The total mean value of percent perfect agreement for the validity packets across prompts ranged from 65.0 to 75.0. The grade 4 expository prompt produced a total mean value of 77.0, and the range of mean values across validity packets was 71.0 to 81.0. The grade 4 narrative prompt produced a total mean value of 76.0, and the range of mean values across validity packets was 67.0 to 81.0. The grade 8 expository prompt generated a total mean value of 65.0, and the range of mean values across validity packets was 56.0 to 68.0. The grade 8 persuasive prompt produced a total mean value of 71.0, and the range of mean values across validity packets was 68.0 to 81.0. The grade 10 expository prompt produced a total mean value of 75.0, and the range of mean values across validity packets was 63.0 to 80.0. The grade 10 persuasive prompt produced a total mean value of 85.0, and the range of mean values across validity packets was 80.0 to 93.0.

Reliability

Evaluation of response ratings primarily occurred in two ways to ensure that readers adhered to the established criteria for scoring responses. First, consistency in scoring was maintained by training readers and monitoring the scoring process. Second, reliability of the combined ratings was estimated by coefficient alpha. Coefficient alpha gives the expected correlation between combined ratings of the scoring team and those of a hypothetical parallel team doing the same task (CLAST, 1990).

Training before scoring and during scoring was used to develop and maintain consistency of scoring by individual readers and the group of readers. The scoring process was monitored by checking the assignment of ratings, the number of split ratings, and the distribution of ratings for each reader. Papers assigned noncontiguous scores were submitted to a referee who resolved the split scores. Very few noncontiguous scores required a fourth reader to resolve the split scores. During and after each reading session, reader agreement data reflecting the reliability of ratings was examined. For the spring 1998 census assessment, the percentage of perfect agreement ranged from 54.2% to 64.5% across grades and types of writing. The percentage of noncontiguous scores ranged from 1.4% to 4.5% across grades and types of writing. The percentage of scores within one score point ranged from 95.5% to 98.8% across grades and types of writing. The percentage of scores within one score point indicated that there was a high level of reader agreement. Tables 3-5 present the interrater reliability by prompt for each grade.

Table 3

Interrater Reliability by Prompt for the Fourth Grade Scores

	Prompt			
	Expository		Narrative	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Number Read	75,393		75,207	
Perfect Agreement	47,890	63.52	48,374	64.32
Contiguous Agreement	26,394	35.01	25,753	34.24
Noncontiguous Scores	1,109	1.47	1,080	1.44

Table 4

Interrater Reliability by Prompt for the Eighth Grade Scores

	Prompt			
	Expository		Persuasive	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Number Read	69,916		69,894	
Perfect Agreement	37,900	54.2	39,588	56.7
Contiguous Agreement	28,845	41.3	28,091	40.2
Noncontiguous Scores	3,171	4.50	2,215	3.20

Table 5

Interrater Reliability by Prompt for the Tenth Grade Scores

	Prompt			
	Expository		Persuasive	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Number Read	58,666		58,698	
Perfect Agreement	33,814	57.6	37,880	64.5
Contiguous Agreement	23,350	39.8	20,183	34.3
Noncontiguous Scores	1,502	2.5	635	1.08

Reliability of combined ratings for student responses was estimated by coefficient alpha. The formula is

$$r_{kk} = \frac{K}{K-1}\left[1 - \frac{\Sigma S_i^2}{S_t^2}\right]$$

where r_{kk} is the coefficient of reliability, K is the number of test items, ΣS_i^2 is the sum of item variances, and S_t^2 is the variance of examinees' total scores. Table 6 reports coefficient alpha by nonrefereed (scores before refereeing) and refereed scores (scores after refereeing) for the individual prompts.

Table 6

Coefficient Alpha by Prompt for Nonrefereed Scores and Refereed Scores

Prompt	Nonrefereed Scores	Refereed Scores
Grade 4 Expository	.85	.87
Grade 4 Narrative	.87	.88
Grade 8 Expository	.78	.85
Grade 8 Persuasive	.81	.85
Grade 10 Expository	.85	.88
Grade 10 Persuasive	.88	.89

While a high level of reader agreement and score consistency was reported for these specific prompts, individual-level results should be used with caution. Results should serve as information to students, parents, and teachers about the student's writing ability on the single prompt presented to that student. Generalizability of scores on these prompts to other prompts within the same mode of writing or across modes of writing was not measured by *Florida Writes!*

Student Performance on the Census Assessment

Results of student performance on the fourth grade, eighth grade, and tenth grade census assessment are presented in this section. Tables 7-12 report the frequency distribution, percentage, and cumulative percentage of holistic score points by grade and prompt for Florida's

students. Tables 13-18 present the percentage distribution of holistic score points by racial or ethnic group for each prompt. Tables 19-21 report the percentage distribution of holistic score points by gender for each prompt. Tables 22-27 present the percentage distribution of holistic score points by primary language spoken at home for each prompt.

Table 7

Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Cumulative Percentage of Holistic Score Points for the Grade 4 Expository Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
0.0	501	0.7	0.7
1.0	1,492	2.0	2.6
1.5	1,961	2.6	5.2
2.0	10,239	13.6	18.8
2.5	10,017	13.3	32.1
3.0	24,496	32.5	64.6
3.5	11,820	15.7	80.3
4.0	11,252	14.9	95.2
4.5	2,422	3.2	98.4
5.0	924	1.2	99.6
5.5	213	0.3	99.9
6.0	56	0.1	100.0
Total	75,393		

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 8

Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Cumulative Percentage of Holistic Score Points for the Grade 4 Narrative Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
0.0	814	1.1	1.1
1.0	1,211	1.6	2.7
1.5	1,610	2.1	4.8
2.0	9,046	12.0	16.9
2.5	9,014	12.0	28.8
3.0	25,567	34.0	62.8
3.5	11,798	15.7	78.5
4.0	11,434	15.2	93.7
4.5	3,034	4.0	97.8
5.0	1,202	1.6	99.4
5.5	337	0.4	99.8
6.0	140	0.2	100.0
Total	75,207		

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 9

Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Cumulative Percentage of Holistic Score Points for the Grade 8 Expository Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
0.0	270	0.4	0.4
1.0	504	0.7	1.1
1.5	1,011	1.4	2.6
2.0	4,299	6.1	8.7
2.5	6,942	9.9	18.6
3.0	20,044	28.7	47.3
3.5	15,136	21.6	68.9
4.0	13,006	18.6	87.6
4.5	5,137	7.3	94.9
5.0	2,295	3.3	98.2
5.5	890	1.3	99.5
6.0	382	0.5	100.0
Total	69,916		

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 10

Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Cumulative Percentage of Holistic Score Points for the Grade 8 Persuasive Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
0.0	333	0.5	0.5
1.0	913	1.3	1.8
1.5	1,237	1.8	3.6
2.0	5,374	7.7	11.2
2.5	7,768	11.1	22.4
3.0	20,785	29.7	52.1
3.5	14,389	20.6	72.7
4.0	12,464	17.8	90.5
4.5	4,307	6.2	96.7
5.0	1,618	2.3	99.0
5.5	506	0.7	99.7
6.0	200	0.3	100.0
Total	69,894		

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 11

Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Cumulative Percentage of Holistic Score Points for the Grade 10 Expository Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
0.0	208	0.4	0.4
1.0	696	1.2	1.5
1.5	844	1.4	3.0
2.0	2,366	4.0	7.0
2.5	3,583	6.1	13.1
3.0	11,139	19.0	32.1
3.5	11,229	19.1	51.2
4.0	16,770	28.6	79.8
4.5	6,471	11.0	90.9
5.0	3,502	6.0	96.8
5.5	1,281	2.2	99.0
6.0	577	1.0	100.0
Total	58,666		

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 12

Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Cumulative Percentage of Holistic Score Points for the Grade 10 Persuasive Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
0.0	314	0.5	0.5
1.0	844	1.4	2.0
1.5	808	1.4	3.3
2.0	3,487	5.9	9.3
2.5	3,971	6.8	16.1
3.0	12,174	20.7	36.8
3.5	9,669	16.5	53.3
4.0	18,541	31.6	84.9
4.5	4,934	8.4	93.3
5.0	2,788	4.7	98.0
5.5	828	1.4	99.4
6.0	340	0.6	100.0
Total	58,698		

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 13

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Racial/Ethnic Group for the Grade 4 Expository Prompt

	Racial/Ethnic Group							
Holistic Score Points	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pac.Isl.	Am.Indian/ Alsk.Native	Multiracial	Unknown	Total
0.0	0.3	1.3	1.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.7
1.0	1.1	4.0	2.4	0.8	1.2	1.1	3.3	2.0
1.5	1.8	4.5	2.9	0.7	2.9	1.1	3.3	2.6
2.0	11.3	19.6	13.1	8.6	14.1	12.7	14.4	13.6
2.5	12.4	15.8	13.1	10.6	14.1	12.2	14.1	13.3
3.0	33.2	30.5	32.9	33.1	29.4	32.8	36.7	32.5
3.5	17.0	12.3	15.6	18.6	17.6	17.1	13.0	15.7
4.0	17.0	10.1	14.4	19.3	16.5	18.4	10.0	14.9
4.5	4.0	1.5	3.0	4.8	2.9	2.4	1.9	3.2
5.0	1.6	0.4	1.1	2.2	1.2	1.4	0.7	1.2
5.5	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.3
6.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Total								100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 14

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Racial/Ethnic Group for the Grade 4 Narrative Prompt

	Racial/Ethnic Group							
Holistic Score Points	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pac.Isl.	Am.Indian/ Alsk.Native	Multiracial	Unknown	Total
0.0	0.5	2.1	1.5	0.5	1.1	1.0	5.2	1.1
1.0	0.9	3.0	2.2	0.5	1.6	1.0	3.4	1.6
1.5	1.5	3.7	2.4	1.3	1.6	2.0	2.6	2.1
2.0	10.0	16.8	12.2	8.1	15.9	10.3	17.2	12.0
2.5	10.9	14.9	12.0	7.4	10.1	11.3	13.8	12.0
3.0	34.1	34.3	33.7	31.5	37.0	28.1	32.5	34.0
3.5	16.9	12.7	15.5	19.7	8.5	19.5	10.4	15.7
4.0	17.5	9.6	14.8	20.7	16.4	18.0	11.6	15.2
4.5	4.9	2.1	3.7	5.7	5.8	5.8	2.2	4.0
5.0	2.0	0.6	1.4	3.4	2.1	2.0	0.7	1.6
5.5	0.6	0.1	0.4	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.4	0.4
6.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2
Total								100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 15

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Racial/Ethnic Group for the Grade 8 Expository Prompt

	Racial/Ethnic Group							
Holistic Score Points	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pac.Isl.	Am.Indian/ Alsk.Native	Multiracial	Unknown	Total
0.0	0.2	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.4	2.5	0.4
1.0	0.3	1.5	1.1	0.6	1.2	1.7	1.1	0.7
1.5	0.7	2.9	1.8	1.4	1.2	1.7	6.8	1.4
2.0	4.0	10.7	7.6	2.8	6.5	7.0	13.2	6.1
2.5	7.9	14.4	11.6	6.0	11.2	4.5	13.5	9.9
3.0	27.3	30.5	32.0	22.9	25.4	31.0	30.2	28.7
3.5	23.1	18.9	20.2	22.1	24.3	22.3	15.3	21.6
4.0	21.0	13.6	16.3	24.5	17.8	18.6	10.3	18.6
4.5	8.8	4.5	5.7	10.6	7.1	7.0	5.0	7.3
5.0	4.2	1.5	2.1	5.1	3.6	2.9	0.7	3.3
5.5	1.7	0.5	0.7	2.3	1.8	2.5	1.1	1.3
6.0	0.7	0.2	0.3	1.5	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.5
Total								100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 16

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Racial/Ethnic Group for the Grade 8 Persuasive Prompt

	Racial/Ethnic Group							
Holistic Score Points	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pac.Isl.	Am.Indian/ Alsk.Native	Multiracial	Unknown	Total
0.0	0.3	0.8	0.8	0.3	0.0	0.4	3.1	0.5
1.0	0.6	2.5	2.2	0.7	0.6	1.6	3.8	1.3
1.5	1.1	3.2	2.3	1.2	1.3	1.2	4.9	1.8
2.0	5.7	12.2	8.8	5.1	7.0	4.1	15.4	7.7
2.5	9.1	15.8	12.5	7.2	11.4	11.0	14.3	11.1
3.0	28.9	32.4	29.5	26.1	34.2	28.2	25.5	29.7
3.5	22.0	17.2	20.4	20.6	17.1	24.5	14.0	20.6
4.0	20.7	11.5	15.8	22.3	20.3	17.1	12.6	17.8
4.5	7.6	3.0	5.1	9.6	7.0	6.9	4.5	6.2
5.0	2.9	1.1	1.7	4.6	1.3	4.1	1.0	2.3
5.5	0.9	0.2	0.6	1.9	0.0	0.8	0.3	0.7
6.0	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
Total								100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 17

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Racial/Ethnic Group for the Grade 10 Expository Prompt

	Racial/Ethnic Group							
Holistic Score Points	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pac.Isl.	Am.Indian/ Alsk.Native	Multiracial	Unknown	Total
0.0	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.1	1.5	0.0	3.2	0.4
1.0	0.7	2.2	1.7	0.6	0.8	1.8	2.2	1.2
1.5	0.9	2.7	1.9	0.5	0.8	2.2	4.2	1.4
2.0	2.7	6.9	5.2	2.5	2.3	3.6	9.6	4.0
2.5	4.6	9.7	7.1	4.4	4.6	5.4	9.6	6.1
3.0	17.0	24.7	19.8	11.9	23.7	13.5	22.7	19.0
3.5	18.5	20.8	20.4	14.7	14.5	13.5	18.3	19.1
4.0	30.9	22.6	28.3	29.0	29.8	31.4	20.5	28.6
4.5	12.9	6.5	9.1	17.6	11.5	14.8	5.4	11.0
5.0	7.3	2.7	4.5	11.1	4.6	11.2	3.0	6.0
5.5	2.9	0.7	1.2	5.2	5.3	1.3	1.0	2.2
6.0	1.4	0.2	0.4	2.4	0.8	1.3	0.2	1.0
Total								100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 18

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Racial/Ethnic Group

for the Grade 10 Persuasive Prompt

	Racial/Ethnic Group							
Holistic Score Points	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pac.Isl.	Am.Indian/ Alsk.Native	Multiracial	Unknown	Total
0.0	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.8	4.4	0.5
1.0	0.8	2.5	2.3	1.3	0.0	0.8	3.0	1.4
1.5	0.8	2.6	2.1	0.8	1.5	0.8	2.1	1.4
2.0	4.2	9.8	7.5	4.3	8.0	6.8	8.4	5.9
2.5	4.9	11.0	8.0	5.0	5.8	8.0	10.9	6.8
3.0	18.6	25.9	22.4	16.6	21.9	19.8	25.3	20.7
3.5	16.2	17.2	16.8	14.3	17.5	17.5	15.3	16.5
4.0	35.0	23.5	29.9	34.0	30.7	30.0	21.1	31.6
4.5	10.3	4.4	6.0	11.4	8.0	7.6	5.1	8.4
5.0	6.2	1.7	3.2	7.6	3.6	6.5	3.0	4.7
5.5	1.9	0.5	0.8	2.8	0.7	0.8	1.2	1.4
6.0	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.9	2.2	0.8	0.2	0.6
Total								100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 19

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Gender for the Grade 4 Expository and Narrative Prompts

	Expository			Narrative		
	Gender			Gender		
Holistic Score Points	Male	Female	Unknown	Male	Female	Unknown
0.0	0.9	0.5	0.0	1.4	0.8	0.0
1.0	2.6	1.4	5.1	2.3	1.0	5.9
1.5	3.3	2.0	0.0	2.7	1.6	0.0
2.0	16.0	11.3	20.5	15.2	9.0	17.6
2.5	14.5	12.2	20.5	13.8	10.3	17.6
3.0	32.7	32.3	41.0	34.5	33.5	26.5
3.5	14.2	17.1	5.1	14.0	17.3	17.6
4.0	12.4	17.3	7.7	11.9	18.4	8.7
4.5	2.4	4.0	0.0	2.9	5.2	2.9
5.0	0.7	1.7	0.0	1.0	2.1	0.0
5.5	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.0
6.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 20

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Gender for the Grade 8 Expository and Persuasive Prompts

	Expository			Persuasive		
	Gender			Gender		
Holistic Score Points	Male	Female	Unknown	Male	Female	Unknown
0.0	0.5	0.3	1.9	0.7	0.3	4.0
1.0	1.1	0.4	0.0	2.0	0.6	6.0
1.5	2.0	0.9	9.6	2.7	0.9	4.0
2.0	8.1	4.3	19.2	10.8	4.8	14.0
2.5	11.8	8.2	17.3	13.3	9.1	20.0
3.0	30.4	27.1	28.8	31.4	28.2	18.0
3.5	20.8	22.5	7.7	18.6	22.4	10.0
4.0	16.0	21.1	7.7	14.1	21.3	14.0
4.5	5.7	8.9	5.8	4.2	8.0	4.0
5.0	2.4	4.1	0.0	1.6	3.0	4.0
5.5	1.0	1.6	1.9	0.4	1.0	0.0
6.0	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.2	0.4	2.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 21

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Gender for the Grade 10 Expository and Persuasive Prompts

	Expository			Persuasive		
	Gender			Gender		
Holistic Score Points	Male	Female	Unknown	Male	Female	Unknown
0.0	0.5	0.2	5.9	0.8	0.3	6.6
1.0	1.9	0.6	3.9	2.2	0.8	3.3
1.5	2.0	0.9	3.9	1.9	0.9	3.3
2.0	5.4	2.8	9.8	7.7	4.3	11.5
2.5	7.5	4.9	9.8	7.9	5.8	9.8
3.0	21.2	17.0	23.5	22.9	18.8	26.2
3.5	19.1	19.2	17.6	16.9	16.1	11.5
4.0	25.7	31.2	17.6	28.1	34.7	23.0
4.5	9.3	12.6	2.0	6.5	10.1	1.6
5.0	4.9	7.0	5.9	3.6	5.7	2.3
5.5	1.8	2.6	0.0	1.0	1.7	0.0
6.0	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.4	0.7	0.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 22

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Primary Language for the Grade 4 Expository Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Primary Language				Total
	English	Spanish	Other	Unknown	
0.0	0.5	1.4	0.9	1.1	0.7
1.0	1.7	3.0	2.8	2.5	2.0
1.5	2.3	3.6	3.9	2.9	2.6
2.0	12.7	15.5	16.7	15.5	13.6
2.5	12.9	13.6	15.4	14.1	13.3
3.0	32.4	31.6	33.4	32.9	32.5
3.5	16.4	14.7	13.7	13.6	15.7
4.0	15.7	13.1	11.1	13.7	14.9
4.5	3.6	2.5	1.5	2.6	3.2
5.0	1.4	0.7	0.4	0.9	1.2
5.5	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3
6.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Total					100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 23

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Primary Language for the Grade 4 Narrative Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Primary Language				Total
	English	Spanish	Other	Unknown	
0.0	0.9	2.0	1.6	1.3	1.1
1.0	1.4	3.1	2.3	1.8	1.6
1.5	2.0	3.0	2.7	2.4	2.1
2.0	11.5	13.8	14.0	12.8	12.0
2.5	11.7	13.1	13.3	12.2	12.0
3.0	34.1	33.0	34.0	33.6	34.0
3.5	16.0	13.8	14.4	15.5	15.7
4.0	15.6	13.7	13.6	14.4	15.2
4.5	4.3	3.0	2.6	4.0	4.0
5.0	1.7	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.6
5.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4
6.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Total					100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 24

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Primary Language for the Grade 8 Expository Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Primary Language				Total
	English	Spanish	Other	Unknown	
0.0	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4
1.0	0.7	1.6	1.2	0.6	0.7
1.5	1.3	2.4	2.5	1.4	1.4
2.0	5.8	9.1	8.3	6.0	6.1
2.5	9.6	13.2	11.9	9.9	9.9
3.0	28.2	31.9	30.4	29.1	28.7
3.5	21.9	19.9	20.1	21.4	21.6
4.0	19.1	14.2	15.5	18.8	18.6
4.5	7.7	4.6	5.8	7.2	7.3
5.0	3.5	1.8	2.9	3.1	3.3
5.5	1.4	0.5	0.7	1.3	1.3
6.0	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.5
Total					100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 25

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Primary Language for the Grade 8 Persuasive Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Primary Language				Total
	English	Spanish	Other	Unknown	
0.0	0.4	1.4	0.8	0.5	0.5
1.0	1.1	3.4	1.9	1.2	1.3
1.5	1.6	3.5	2.9	1.9	1.8
2.0	7.3	11.0	10.7	7.3	7.7
2.5	10.8	14.1	13.3	10.9	11.1
3.0	29.8	29.6	31.2	29.0	29.7
3.5	20.7	18.2	18.1	21.5	20.6
4.0	18.3	13.2	14.4	18.3	17.8
4.5	6.5	4.2	4.2	5.9	6.2
5.0	2.4	1.0	1.9	2.3	2.3
5.5	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.7
6.0	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3
Total					100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 26

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Primary Language for the Grade 10 Expository Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Primary Language				Total
	English	Spanish	Other	Unknown	
0.0	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.4
1.0	1.0	3.2	2.6	0.9	1.2
1.5	1.3	3.2	2.5	1.4	1.4
2.0	3.8	7.3	5.8	3.8	4.0
2.5	5.9	9.2	8.4	5.8	6.1
3.0	18.9	21.1	18.2	18.7	19.0
3.5	18.9	20.5	17.1	20.4	19.1
4.0	28.6	24.4	27.7	30.1	28.6
4.5	11.5	7.0	8.8	10.5	11.0
5.0	6.3	2.9	5.2	5.5	6.0
5.5	2.4	0.7	2.5	1.6	2.2
6.0	1.1	0.3	0.7	0.8	1.0
Total					100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

Table 27

Percentage Distribution of Holistic Score Points by Primary Language for the Grade 10 Persuasive Prompt

Holistic Score Points	Primary Language				Total
	English	Spanish	Other	Unknown	
0.0	0.4	1.2	1.4	0.7	0.5
1.0	1.2	4.1	3.8	1.5	1.4
1.5	1.2	3.4	2.3	1.6	1.4
2.0	5.6	10.3	8.7	5.8	5.9
2.5	6.5	9.9	9.0	6.6	6.8
3.0	20.4	22.5	21.0	22.0	20.7
3.5	16.4	16.8	15.4	17.0	16.5
4.0	32.3	24.5	26.2	31.4	31.6
4.5	8.9	4.3	6.9	7.5	8.4
5.0	5.1	2.2	3.8	4.1	4.7
5.5	1.5	0.6	0.9	1.3	1.4
6.0	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.6	0.6
Total					100.0

Note. A zero indicates an unscorable response.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1

Writing Assessment Advisory Committee Members

Fourth Grade Writing Assessment Advisory Committee

Kerry Archer
Collier County Schools

Cheri Boone
Palm Beach County Schools

Linda Butler-Mosley
Hendry County Schools

Jodi Branch
Santa Rosa county Schools

Kathy Dixon
Alachua County Schools

Molly Everett
Sumter County Schools

Gloria Plaza
Dade County Schools

Vivian Gomolka
Escambia County Schools

Etta Harbin
Dade County Schools

Denise Haymes
Flagler County Schools

Debbie Moore
Okeechobee County Schools

Pat Nelms
Pinellas County Schools

Hui Fang Huang Su
Palm Beach County Schools

Gwendolyn Trotter
Florida A & M University

Joseph Van Valkenburg
Broward County Schools

Barbara Vandervort
Duval County Schools

Maria Vasquez
Orange County Schools

Myrna Walters
Seminole County Schools

Judy Welborn
Levy County Schools

Linda Wiltz
Orange County Schools

Donna Wiseman
Leon County Schools

Carol York
Hillsborough County Schools

(Appendix 1 continued)

Writing Assessment Advisory Committee Members

Eighth Grade Writing Assessment Advisory Committee

Janet Allen
University of Central Florida

Elizabeth Alves
Dade County Schools

Mary Brown
Duval County Schools

Ann Bryan
Santa Rosa County Schools

Bill Christofferson
Hendry County Schools

Ann Dallman
Pinellas County Schools

Wanda Drosin
Osceola County Schools

Barbara Foreman
Columbia County Schools

Mary Kay Habgood
Manatee County Schools

Fielding Hossley
Brevard County Schools

Max Hutto
Hillsborough County Schools

Odalis Mandulay
Alachua County Schools

Mary Mikell
Okaloosa County Schools

Diane Pierce
Martin County Schools

Cynthia Porter
Broward County Schools

Lorna Raper
Holmes County Schools

Diane Solms
St. Johns County Schools

Clara Williams
Broward County Schools

Lorie White
Sarasota County Schools

Randee Winterbottom
Leon County Schools

(Appendix 1 continued)

Writing Assessment Advisory Committee Members

Tenth Grade Writing Assessment Advisory Committee

Barbara Anderson
Martin County Schools

Jan Bennitt
Jefferson County Schools

Nydia Chavez
Orange County Schools

Kimberlee Cooper
St. Lucie County Schools

Joe Crawley
Citrus County Schools

Vicki DiGiacomo
Osceola County Schools

Janey DuPont
Gadsden County Schools

Linda Fox
Bay County Schools

Eleanor Franks
Hendry County Schools

John Howard
Highlands County Schools

Beth Johnson
Polk County Schools

Caryn McDermott
Pasco County Schools

Laura Melvin
Dade County Schools

Lottie Muldrow
Leon County Schools

Ben Nelms
University of Florida

Dee Schumacher
Seminole County Schools

Linda Thompson
Escambia County Schools

Karen VanDeVoorde
Indian River County Schools

Geneva Woodward
Dade County Schools

Appendix 2

Sample Prompt Evaluation Form

Purpose of Writing _____

Prompt Number _____

Interest Level of Prompt

1. Will students find the topic interesting? Yes____ No____
2. Will students be able to relate to the topic? Yes____ No____

Bias in Prompt

3. Is the topic of the prompt biased? Yes____ No____
4. Is the wording of the prompt biased? Yes____ No____
5. Is the prior knowledge required to write on the topic biased? Yes____ No____
6. Will the prompt tend to elicit responses that are unduly emotional or religious, or in some way difficult for readers to fairly judge? Yes____ No____

Purpose of Writing

7. Are the requirements of the prompt clear? Yes____ No____
8. Will the prompt tend to elicit writing in the desired purpose of writing? Yes____ No____

Wording of Prompt

9. Is the wording of the prompt misleading? Yes____ No____
10. Are the syntax, vocabulary, and readability of the prompt appropriate for the majority of students? Yes____ No____

Organization of Response

11. Will the prompt tend to elicit listing-type responses or clichés? Yes____ No____
12. Is the prompt at fault for oversuggesting a method of organization? Yes____ No____
13. Will the prompt fail to suggest a method of organization? Yes____ No____
14. Will students be able to fully respond to the prompt within the designated testing period? Yes____ No____

Should the prompt be part of the prompt pool? Yes____ No____

Reviewer's Signature _____

Date _____